

1609/593

A SHORT
TREATISE
ON
POLYGAMY;
OR,

The Marrying and Cohabiting with more than ONE
Woman at the same Time, proved from
Scripture, to be agreeable to the

WILL OF GOD:

AND,

That Christ was not the GIVER of a

NEW LAW.

IN WHICH ARE ALSO CONSIDERED,

The Just Grounds for Divorce, and what constitutes a
lawful Marriage, in the

SIGHT OF GOD.

BY JAMES EDWARD HAMILTON.

To the Law and to the Testimony.—ISAIAH.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

MDCCLXXXVI.

1786

h
ons



AND WHEREAS the said land is more than one
hundred and twenty acres in extent and is
situated in the County of ... State of ...

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD unto the said ...

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said ...

AND WHEREAS the said ...

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD unto the said ...

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said ...

AND WHEREAS the said ...

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD unto the said ...

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said ...

Advertisement.

THE Author thinks it incumbent on him to acquaint his readers, that this performance is, for the most part, taken from the Rev. Mr. Madan's Thelyphthora. He offers it to the public simple and without ornament, though the subject, being of universal concern, is capable of every art that can tend to inflame or interest the passions: but his appeal (for such he considers this work) is to the *reason*, and not to the *passions*, of mankind. He is far from thinking that what appears conclusive to him, will appear equally so to the world. Bigots and prejudiced persons are not to be reasoned with. The word of God itself is not sufficiently clear to them, who prefer the glosses of men to the plain words of Scripture: as if the Deity could not express himself sufficiently clear to be understood without the aid of his imperfect creatures. He is perfectly sensible of the obloquy, and even personal danger, that have hitherto pursued the avowers of

generally unknown truths. But as he thinks it his duty to the God of truth to avow, what he believes to be *the truth*, upon proper occasions, and to act accordingly, he is perfectly indifferent as to the sentiments of the world.

He takes this opportunity of declaring that, tho' he has not the least doubt that polygamy is, even *now*, permitted by God, yet he firmly believes, that the greatest happiness in the marriage state can be only enjoyed in cohabiting with one woman. His residing so far from Dublin, is the only apology he can make to his friends for this performance not appearing sooner.



ERRATA.

- Page 19, last line, for commandments *read* commandment.
 20, first line, *dele* are.
 22, last line, for alteration *read* alleviation.

THAT *polygamy*, or the *having* and *cohabiting* with *more than one wife at a time*, is not *contrary* to the *will of God*, as *revealed in Scripture*, must be evident from the following considerations:—

Moses, who received the laws, which he delivered to the Jews from Jehovah himself, *Deut. iv. 5.*—"Behold I have taught
" you statutes and judgments, even as the
" Lord my God **COMMANDED** me, that
" ye should do so in the land, whither ye go
" to possess it."—**ALLOWED** the Jews to marry *two wives*, as appears from *Deut. ix. 15.*—"If a man have two wives, one
" *beloved*, and another *hated*; and they have
" borne him children, both the *beloved* and
" the *hated*: and if the first-born be her's
" that was hated; then it shall be, when he

" maketh his SONS to inherit, that which
 " he hath, that he may not make the SON
 " of the beloved first-born before the SON
 " of the hated, which is indeed the first-
 " born, by giving him a double portion of
 " all that he hath : for he is the beginning
 " of his strength, and the right of the first
 " born is his."——Nay, in some cases,
 COMMANDED polygamy. Exodus xii. 16.
 " If a man entices a maid that is not be-
 " trothed, and lie with her, he shall
 " surely endow her to be his wife." *Deut.*
 xxii. 28, 29. " If a man find a damsel,
 " that is a virgin, which is not betrothed,
 " and lay hold on her, and lye with her;
 " and they be found, the man that lay
 " with her shall give unto the damsel's fa-
 " ther, fifty sheckles of silver, and she
 " shall be his wife : because he hath hum-
 " bled her; he may not put her away all
 " his days." *Deut.* xxv. 5, 10. " If bre-
 " thern dwell together, and one of them
 " die, and have no child, the wife of the
 " dead shall not marry without unto a
 " stranger : her husband's brother shall go
 " in unto her, and take her to him to wife,
 " and perform the duty of a husband's bro-
 " ther unto her. And it shall be, that the
 " first-born that she beareth, shall succeed
 " in the name of his brother, which is
 " dead, that his name be not put out of
 " Israel. And if the man like not to take
 " his brother's wife, then let his brother's



“ wife go up unto the gate unto the elders,
 “ and say, my husband's brother refuseth
 “ to raise up unto his brother a name in
 “ Israel; he will not perform the duty of
 “ my husband's brother. Then the elders
 “ of his city shall call him, and speak unto
 “ him: and if he stand to it, and say I
 “ like not to take her; then shall his bro-
 “ ther's wife come unto him in the presence
 “ of the elders, and loose his shoe from off
 “ his foot, and spit in his face, and shall
 “ answer and say, so shall it be done unto
 “ that man, that will not build up his bro-
 “ ther's house, and his name shall be called
 “ in Israel, the house of him that hath
 “ the shoe loosed.” The reader may ob-
 serve, that in these three cases, the *ordi-*
nance is absolute, and without exceptions,
 though they even had wives living: whence
 I may with Bishop Burnet (see Thelyph-
 thora, vol. i. p. 313.) *faithfully* conclude,
 that what God made necessary, in some
 cases to any degree, can in *no case be sinful*
in itself, since God is *holy in all his ways.*
 Moreover, Moses has *regulated* how a man,
 who married a *second wife*, his first still
 living, should act. *Exo. xxi. 10.* “ If he
 “ take him another wife; her food, her rai-
 “ ment, and her duty of marriage shall he
 “ not diminish.” Seeing then, that Moses
 taught such statutes and judgments as the
 Lord COMMANDED him: that by *Deut.*

xxi. 15, he **ALLOWED** *polygamy*; that by *Exo. xxii. 16.*—*Deut. xxii. 28, 29,* and *xxv. 5, 10,* he **COMMANDED** *polygamy*; and by *Exo. xxi. 10,* he regulated *polygamy,* or double marriages, and I say then, as God has **ALLOWED, COMMANDED, REGULATED,** such double marriages or *polygamy, such double marriages or polygamy, must be conformable to his will;* for where has God regulated that which he has condemned? Where has God regulated—**ADULTERIES—THEFTS—MURDERS;**

God, being *infinitely perfect,* must be *unchangeable,* for could he *change,* he must *change* for the better or worse: if the latter, he would *cease* to be *infinitely perfect;* if the former, he would not have been *infinitely perfect* before; therefore, to say, that God can *change* his *mind* or *will* is to speak *blasphemously;* that is, unworthily of him. Therefore, as a being *infinitely perfect,* he *must* be *unchangeable.* Scripture assures us of this truth. *I. Sam. xv. 29.* “The strength of Israel will not die or repent, for he is not a man, that he should repent.” *Mal. iii. 6.* “I am the Lord, I change not.” *James, i. 17.* “Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Now the God of the Jews being the God of the Christians, and the **MORAL ORDINANCES,**

which he gave to them, being binding upon us; for Moses declares, *Deut. xxix. 14, 15.* "Neither with you only do I make this covenant, and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him, that is not (or those who are not) here this day;" that is, with all succeeding generations, till time shall be no more. And Christ says, *Mat. v. 17.* — "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, till Heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled, or until all things be done." And as it has been already proved, that it was the will of God (and God's will is his law) to ALLOW the Jews to marry more than *one wife at the same time*: that in some cases he COMMANDED them to marry *more than one wife*; that he REGULATED such *double marriages*: If then he has *forbidden polygamy or double marriages to Christians*, there would then be more than a *shadow of turning*: For in this instance, he would have *changed his mind*; and if so, he could not have been an *all-perfect being*. But there is no *contradiction* between the *old and new Testament*. That passage in *Mat. ix. 9.* "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife except it be

“for fornication, and shall marry another*,
 “committeth adultery.” (Had it been
 translated; and shall marry ANOTHER’s,
 to wit, wife, that is a woman *illegally*
divorced from her husband; a woman *di-*
vorced from her husband without *sufficient*
cause, there being no *cause* sufficient in the
 sight of God, as declared by Christ, save
 that of *fornication*.) This passage being
 thus *truly translated*, will harmonize with
 the old Testament, *thou shalt not covet thy*
neighbour’s wife; and with great propriety
condemns a practice, at that time frequent
 amongst the Jews, to wit, of men, who
changed their wives, and of *wives* who
changed their husbands; keeping to the
letter, though not to the *spirit*, of the per-
 mission of putting away their wives, in
 some cases *allowed by Moses ONLY*. Deut.
 xiv. 1, 4. Thus Herod Antipas put away

* The relative ἄλλην, or another, must here agree
 with the antecedent γυναῖκα, which we render by the word
 wife; therefore, γυναῖκα must be understood as following
 the word ἄλλην; and this may be construed in the sense of
 ἄλλοτεστιν γυναῖκα—another man’s wife, that is a *divorced*
woman. We find the word ἄλλης so used; I. Cor. x. 2, 9,
 ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνιδησίας, which we rightly translate—another
 man’s conscience. The marrying a maid or widow could
 not be *adultery*, even under the circumstances here men-
 tioned, because there was no law of God to make it so;—
 for where *there is no law, there is no transgression*, Rom. iv.
 14. Were it necessary to quote authorities in support of
common sense, that of Grotius, Barbeyrac, Wetstein, &c.
 &c. might be *alleged*; but neither in this, nor in the pa-
 rallel passages of Mark and Luke, is there the least men-
 tion made of *polygamy*. The question in them being about
unlawful divorces.

his wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, and married his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, though her husband Philip was living. Philo and Josephus take notice of the prevalence of this custom. The parallel passage of *Luke* xviii. 18, follows this strong assertion of Christ's, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the *law* to fail." But did Christ intend to *condemn polygamy as adultery*, by saying in the following verse: "That whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery;" there would have been more than a tittle of the law failed, or done away; for he would have *condemned* that, which the law *allowed*, as has been shown before: but understood as *condemning* a man, who *put away his wife*, for the purpose of marrying *another's wife*, the passage accords with the Old Testament, "thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife."

The most virtuous and pious men, recorded in Scripture, were *polygamists*:—Abraham the father of the faithful, the friend of God, *had two wives*, Sarah and Hagar, *at the same time*. Jacob, besides Billah and Zilpah, *had Leah and Rachel all wives at the same time*. On the latter, God performed a miracle, by making her, at her earnest prayer, *fruitful*; but God *hearkens* not to the prayer of the *ungodly*; more particularly, when they intend persisting in their sinful course. "He that

"turneth away his ear from hearing the
 "law, even his prayers shall be abomination,
Prov. xv. 9. David, into whose bosom
 God gave the WIVES of Saul, *ii. Sam. xii.*
8. God surely would not have given to
 David what it would have been *sinful* for
 David to *possess*. The virtuous high-priest
 Jehoiada took two wives at the same time for
 his pupil Joash. *II. Chron. xxiv. 3.* Is it
 credible that Jehoiada would have taken two
 wives at the same time for his pupil Joash,
 were it contrary to the divine ordinance to
 have more than ONE wife. But it is said,
II. Chron. xxiv. 2. "And Joash begat sons
 "and daughters, and Joash did that which
 "was RIGHT in the sight of the Lord all
 "the days of Jehoiada the priest:" or as
 in *II. Kings, xii. 2.* "All his days wherein
 "Jehoiada the priest instructed him."—
 Now, as *all Scripture is given by inspiration*
of God, II. Tim. ii. 16. Here we have
 God's own testimony, that a man may be a
polygamist, and yet no SINNER: yea, what
 is more, we have God's own word, that a
 man may be a *polygamist*, and yet do RIGHT
 in the sight of God. Moreover, as it is
 said, in *James, ii. 10.* "For whosoever
 "shall keep the whole law, and yet offend
 "in one point, he is guilty of all." This
 proves, that *polygamy* is no sin; for if it
 were, Joash would have certainly *sinned*
in one point, and consequently would not
 have done RIGHT in the sight of God, as
 God himself informs us, that he did.

It is also to be observed, that though the Jewish princes were probably all *polygamists*, and the people in general so too, yet the *prophets*, who were sent to *admonish* them for their *sins* and *transgressions*, never *admonished* them for being *polygamists*. This is the more extraordinary, if *polygamy* were a *sin*; as the prophets were not only appointed to *foretel* things to come, but to *preach* to the people, to *hold forth* the law, to *point out* their *defections* from it, and to *call them to repentance*. Their commission in these respects we find recorded in Scripture: *Isaiah*, lviii. 1. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet; shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." This commission was to be faithfully executed at the peril of the *prophets own destruction*, as appears from the solemn charge given to *Ezekiel*, iii. 18. "When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his way, to save his life: the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at thine hand." Is it credible, that the zealous *Elijah* would have failed to *reprove* *Ahab* for his *polygamy*, were *polygamy* a *sin* (for from his having seventy sons, he must have been a *polygamist*) would *Isaiah*—would *Jeremiah*—would all the prophets have failed in bearing testimony against this common practice of the whole Jewish nation, from the prince on the throne

to the *lowest of the people*, were it a *sin*? such a supposition is not possible: if *polygamy* be a *sin*, whence comes it not to have been mentioned as such—by GOD—by MOSES—or by any ONE of the prophets?

If *polygamy* be a *sin*—even a *national sin*—an *epidemical transgression of the law of God*, it is very extraordinary, that our Lord's fore-runner, *John the Baptist*, should not mention, nor even hint at it; for his commission ran thus: *Luke, i. 17.* “To turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

No man could have a fairer opportunity to bear his *testimony* against a *national sin*, than the *Baptist* had; for it is said (*Mat. iii. 5.*) “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and among the numbers, who were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins (ver. 6.) there were many harlots.” (*chap. xxi. 32.*) So that it is evident, that he did not spare to *inveigh* most sharply against the *sin of fleshy uncleanness*; had *polygamy* been of this kind, he doubtless would have preached against it, which, if he had, some trace would most probably be left of it, as there is of his preaching against the sin of whoredom, by the *harlots* or *lewd women* being said to *believe in him*; which they certainly would not have done, any more than the *Scribes*.

and *Pharisees*, (*Mat. xxi. 32.*) if the preacher had not awakened them to a deep and real sense of their *guilt*, by setting forth the heinousness of *their sin*. He exerted his eloquence also against *public grievances*; such as the extortion of *public officers* of the revenue,—the *publicans*,—*tax-gatherers*; likewise against the oppressive methods used by the *soldiery*, who made it a custom, either to take people's goods by *violence*, or to *defraud* them of their property, by extorting it under the terror of *false accusation*. These were *public grievances*, against which the *Baptist* bore so open a testimony, that the *publicans* and *soldiers* came to him, saying—"What shall we do?" This being the case, is it conceivable, that a man of the *Baptist's* character, who was so zealous for the *honour of the law*, as to *reprove* even a *king* to his face for *adultery*, should suffer, if *polygamy* be *adultery*, a whole nation, as it were, of *public adulterers* to stand before him, and not bear the least *testimony* against them; and this, though he was particularly *commissioned*, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord?

Had Christ *condemned polygamy*, as *adultery*; and as such *contrary* to the *seventh* commandment, he must at the same time have *defeated* his own *title* to the character of *Messiah*; concerning whom God had sworn to David, that "of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would

“raise up Christ to sit upon his throne.” See *Acts*, iii. 30, with *Ps.* cxxxii. 11. “The fruit of his loins,” in this place, and “the seed which shall proceed out of thy bowels.” II. *Sam.* vii. 12. are expressed I. *Chron.* xxii. 9, by —“Behold a SON shall be born unto thee,” which, though primarily spoken of Solomon, ultimately points to Christ as emphatically called the SON of DAVID. But, bastards among the Jews, no more than with us, meant SONS, sons capable of inheriting, nor could the descendants of bastards inherit: But Christ being descended on both father and mother’s side from the issue of *polygamous marriages*, to wit, from Solomon, Nathan, Abijah, &c. could not, if *polygamous marriages* were *unlawful* and adulterous, be deemed the SON of DAVID, capable of *lawfully* inheriting his father’s throne; and if so, he could not be the Messiah: to avoid this conclusion, we *must* admit, that *polygamous marriages* were *lawful*. And it may, without presumption be inferred, that were polygamous marriages in any respect *displeasing* to the Deity, he would have timely prevented the descent of his well-beloved son, the Messiah JESUS CHRIST from them.

From what has been said, it appears that *polygamy* was *practised* amongst the Jews before the coming of Christ; and that it continued so after him, — we may infer from St. Paul’s recommend-

ing to the primitive Christians, I. *Tim.* lii. 2; 12, to choose their bishops or inspectors and deacons, from among those Christians, who had but *one wife*; not, however condemning those, who had *more*, but preferring the former to *active offices*, probably from their having fewer family cares. St. Paul, in enumerating those *sinners*, that shall not enter into the *kingdom of Heaven*, makes no mention of *polygamists*. I. *Cor.* vi. 9, 10. "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners (but not a word of *polygamists*) shall inherit the kingdom of God;" nor does any of the other apostles condemn, or even glance at, *polygamy* as a *sin*. And though St. Paul declares, *Acts* xx. 27. that he opened to them *all the council of God*, he makes no mention of *polygamy* as a *sin*; which he would not have failed to have condemned, as he did every other *fleshy transgression* of God's *pure and holy law*.

That *polygamy* is not *contrary* to *Christianity* is no singular opinion. An assembly of Protestant divines assembled at Wittenberg, among whom was Luther, **ALLOWED** Philip Landgrave of Hesse, to marry a *second wife*, though his first wife was alive. The marquis of Northampton's marriage with the daughter of lord Cobham was **ALLOWED** to be *valid* by an assem-

bly of English divines, among whom was Cranmer and Ridley; though the divorce from his *first wife* was *only* from *bed-and-board*. Milton having parted from his first wife upon account of contrariety of disposition, determined to marry again during her *life-time*, and wrote in defence of *such marriages*. In the Protestant Swiss Cantons and Geneva, divorces are easily obtained, on account of contrariety of disposition, and the parties are **ALLOWED** to marry other persons. Though the woman's marriage in this case is evidently condemned. I. Cor. vii. 11. Bishop Burnet did not find, that *polygamy* was forbidden by the Gospel. Thelyphthora, vol. i. p. 311. But not only Protestant writers assert the lawfulness of *polygamy*, but even many eminent Popish writers before the council of Trent. Durandus á St. Portian, in the 14th century; Alphonfus Tostatus, bishop of Avila, in the 15th century; and particularly Cardinal Cajetan, who, as one of the ablest Popish divines, was appointed to dispute with Luther in the 16th century, do confess,—
 “ that a *plurality* of wives is *lawful*, according to the *divine law*, and that it hath no *indecenty* in it by the *law* of *Nature*; but it would be *lawful* even to *priests*, unless *prohibited* by the *discipline* of the church.” Cardinal Bellarmine says, “ *Polygamy* is not *repugnant* to the *law of Nature*, which is *divine*, that one man might beget and bring up children

“by *more women than one.*” Cardinal Cajetan asserts, “that a *plurality* of wives is “*no where prohibited by God.* And therefore Paul, when he forbids a *bishop* to “have a plurality of wives, grants it to “*others.*” But polygamy being condemned in the council of Trent, and those who should assert its “not being contrary to the “law of God,” was probably done, in order to make *Luther, Zuinglius, Bucer, Melancthon,* and the *other reformers,* the more odious in the sight of the world, they having given this as *their opinion* in the business of Philip, Landgrave of Hesse. See *Thelyphthora*, vol. ii. p. 355, 356, 89.

If it be objected, that though polygamy be not *contrary* to the Old or New Testament; yet the introducing it *now* would be productive of endless mischiefs and confusions: to this I reply in the words of St. Paul; “Nay, but, O man, who art thou, “that repliest against God? Shall the thing “formed say to him that formed it, why “hast thou made me thus.” Moreover, God as a being of *infinite wisdom*, and of infinite goodness, must from this last *attribute*, have the *will* to give us *such regulations and ordinances* as *must tend most* to our happiness. His infinite wisdom enables him to *devise such regulations and ordinances* —so that whatever *regulations and ordinances* we know, have *proceeded* from him, we may *safely embrace and pursue*, as *most conducive* to our *happiness.* But not to in-

sist upon this argument, which is conclusive; what mischiefs can result from polygamy being practised by a comparatively small number of persons, comparable to those infinite disorders, that follow from our not compelling every man, who seduced a virgin, to marry her, as the Deity ordained. Is it not owing to this cause, that every city, town, village, is filled with prostitutes? Is it not owing to this that infanticide is so frequently perpetrated? Is it not owing to this that celibacy is so prevalent, since men may gratify their passions, without the hazard of having a family to support? Is it not owing to this that the most shameful of diseases is so common; to this in a great measure may be attributed, the almost general prophaneness, irreligion, debauchery, selfishness, the enemy of patriotism and every virtue: in a word, almost all the evils of society. But what good results from our not enforcing the divine law? Truly only that by not doing so, we support and nourish that *aristocratic pride*, which from the beginning of the world to the present day in every state, in every country, has been the most cruel and relentless enemy of, what it has been pleased to call, the *lower ranks* of mankind.

CHRIST *not* the giver of a new LAW.

Though it be a very general sentiment, that Christ was sent to promulgate to mankind a NEW and MORE PERFECT LAW,* yet no idea can be more ill-founded. Moses and Christ delivered *only* what God, by his holy spirit directed them to say. *Deut.* iv. 4. "Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God COMMANDED me, that ye should do so, in the land whither ye go to possess it." Christ declares, *John*, xii, 49, "I have not spoken of MYSELF, but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." If then the Father gave Christ a *commandment* to declare *polygamy* to be a MORTAL *sin*, against the *seventh* commandment, which was uniformly ALLOWED as *innocent*, under the

* It would have prevented many deep-rooted prejudices was the signification of words, taken from foreign languages, made use of instead of the words themselves. For instance, the Book of Genesis should be called the *Book of Generation*, or *Production of Things*; that of Exodus—the *Book of the Going Out*: for so these words, taken from the Greek tongue, signify. So was the Gospel called the *Book of the Good News*, (which is the meaning of the Greek word whence Gospel is derived.) Uninformed persons would not have taken up the *idea*, that Christ came to give a *new law*; for the phrase *good news* would have at once undeceived them in that respect: besides, that it would naturally lead them to the particular object of his mission.

Old Testament, it will infer a *change* in the divine *mind* or *will*, which is absurd in an *all-perfect* being, or an absolute contradiction. Such a *change* would argue an *imbecillity* of understanding, like that of *human legislators*, who enact laws to remedy evils, as they arise before them; but, who cannot tell, what a day may bring forth; and therefore, repeal at one time the *law*, which they made at another. That Christ could have been supposed to have been sent to *abrogate* the *moral law*, or *rule of life delivered from God by Moses*: a *law*, which is *founded* upon the *immutable* relation of *reasonable creatures* to their *Creator*, and to *each other*, ought to appear very extraordinary: He who declared, "that he came not to DESTROY the LAW and the PROPHETS, but to FULFIL:"—who declared, "that Heaven and earth could sooner pass, than one jot or one tittle pass from the law". Who referred his hearers to the Old Testament for the truth of his assertions—It is written—--who, when the young man applied to him to know, what he should do to inherit eternal life, answered, "that he should keep the commandments. He saith unto him, "which? Jesus said, thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honour thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith

“unto him, all these things have I kept
 “from my youth up; what lack I yet?—
 “Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be per-
 “fect, sell what thou hast, and give unto
 “the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in
 “Heaven, and come and follow me.”—

Here every *necessary requisite* for entering
 into *eternal life*, as far as the second table
 of the law, is set down; but we find not
 a syllable of any NEW LAW *added*, or
 one tittle *subtracted* from the OLD. The
old law is repeated word for word, and
 summed up in its *spiritual sense*, and import
 in the last sentence, which occurs in the
 Old Testament, in just the same words.—

Lev. xix. 18. “Thou shalt love thy neigh-
 “bour as thyself.” The proof which the
 Lord required of this man’s sincerity, that
 of *giving to the poor*, was as much a duty
 under the *Old Testament* as the *New*, Deut.
 xvi. 7, 11.—Ps. xxxxi. 1.

To say that the *law* delivered from God
 by Moses is imperfect, is to speak *blasphem-
 ously*, that is, *unworthily* of the Deity.
 Besides, what idea must they have of an
all-perfect Being, who can suppose him ca-
 pable of giving an *imperfect law* or *rule of
 life*: but were this disputable, there is an un-
 erring authority, to wit, Scripture, to assure
 us, that the *law* delivered from God by
 Moses, is *perfect*. Ps. xix. 7. “The law
 “of the Lord is perfect.” Rom. vii. 12.
 “The law is holy, and the commandments

"etc. holy, just, and good." Moreover, Abraham, instead of referring the five brothers of the rich man to a *more perfect law* to be delivered by Christ, referred them only to Moses and the prophets. "They have MOSES and the PROPHETS, let them hear them; if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." And we may be assured, that he would not have referred them to MOSES and the PROPHETS, if the *rule of life* laid down by them had been *incomplete, or deficient*: for in this case it would have been of little use to them. Jesus in his sermon upon the Mount, so far from *abrogating the law of Moses*, prefaces his discourse with these remarkable words:—*Mat. vi. 17, 20.* "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till Heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." So far from *abrogating the old rule of life*, delivered from God by Moses, CHRIST declares, that not one single part of it; not a *sentence, a word, a letter*, was to be *destroyed*: he proceeds, "Whosoever, therefore, shall break ONE of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven. But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great

“ in the kingdom of Heaven.” What commandments were these ? The sequel shows, that they were the commandments of the moral law, or rule of life, delivered from God by Moses ; into the spiritual intentment and obligation of which, he then enters upon, which the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* evaded, by adhering strictly to the *letter* ; erroneously thinking, that *thereby* they would be *justified* in the *sight* of *God*.

Had Christ, been supposed to have condemned *polygamy*, as *adultery*, in what he said upon *Mat. xix. 9.* the *Pharisees* could have desired nothing more to their purpose of ensnaring him, by representing him as an *enemy* to *Moses*, as there was not a single passage in the whole law of *Moses* to have supported him against them on that point : it is plain, therefore, that he was understood in no such sense ; if he had, they would not have failed to have retorted upon him his own *declaration*, and his *appeal* to the *writings* of *Moses* ; they might have said, Thou hast said that if we *believed* the *writings* of *Moses*, we *should* *believe* thy *words*. Thou hast said, that if a *man*, *having* a *wife*, *marrieth* *another*, (for thus they might have put it instead of *ANOTHER's*, had they understood him to have condemned *polygamy*) he *committeth* *adultery* ; but where dost thou find this in *Moses's* *writings* ? They are filled with the *allowance* of what thou *condemnest*, without a *single* ex-

ception:—therefore, because we believe Moses's writings, we do not believe *thee*.

They who assert, that Christ was the *giver* of a NEW LAW, give the lie to Scripture. For *James* declares, iv. 12. "There is but ONE lawgiver, so there is but ONE law." Now, we know, that Moses was a *law-giver*, and as we are *assured*, that there was but ONE, Moses only can be that ONE. We know, that we have the *law* delivered by Moses. But as we are *assured*, that there was but ONE law, the law delivered by Moses, must be that ONE law. When Christ says, "a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another;" the term *new* cannot be understood *literally*, without evident inconsistency and palpable contradiction.—For Christ says, *Mat.* xxii. 39, 40. "To love our neighbour as ourself, is one of the two great commandments, on which hang the law and the prophets." And St. John speaks of "our loving one another as an old commandment, which we had from the beginning." Compare I. *John*, ii. 7, with II. *John*, 5, &c. The expression law of Christ, *Gal.* vi. 2. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," probably means what the Apostle Paul expresses, *Rom.* xii. 15. "By weeping with them that weep;" that is, to be so *affected* with their sorrows, as even to make them *our own*, and to be assiduous in their removal and alteration; as we

should be were they our own; and means the same thing as *loving our neighbour as ourself*.

How could Christ be said to observe the law in all things? How give that holy-challenge to the Jews, *John*, viii. 46. Which of you convinceth me of sin? If he had *added to*, or *diminished aught* from the law of *Moses*, both which were forbidden in the most solemn manner. *Deut.* iv. 2. and xii. 32. Now, if Christ had *forbidden that*, which was before *allowed*, he would have *extended* the obligation of the *divine law*, beyond what the Old Testament had done; therefore must, in this case, be said to have *added* something to the law. This consequence cannot be avoided, if we suppose him giving a sense to the Hebrew word, which we translate *adultery*, which it never had before. He would have hereby certainly extended the *seventh* commandment as to its curse and punishment. On the other hand, if he had *allowed*, what the law had forbidden under the Old Testament, he would have diminished from its curse and punishment by narrowing its obligation. In this view, he had *diminished* from the LAW. In either case we *number him among the transgressors*, in a most awful and dreadful sense; for no positive command of the law is revealed with more solemnity, than *Deut.* iv. 2. and *Deut.* xii. 32. which forbid, absolutely forbid *both*. It is therefore as impossible, that Christ

should CONDEMN *polygamy*, as *adultery*, as that he should ALLOW *adultery*, as a *lawful commerce*; because the *first* would be *adding* to the *law*, which *never forbade polygamy*; the other *diminishing* from the *law* which positively *forbade adultery* with another man's wife; *Lev. xx. 10.* and that Christ could not be justified in dispensing with the *law*, his challenge to the Jews evinces: that he was born subject to it, *Gal. ix. 4.* proves.

From all that has been said, it may be concluded, that Christ was not a *destroyer* of the old law; nor a giver of a new law; that therefore, the business of *polygamy*, and all other points, relative to the *commerce of the sexes*, were fully adjusted and settled by the *divine law*, subject to no *alteration* or *change* whatsoever by any power on *EARTH* or *HEAVEN*. For thus saith the Spirit—*Eccles. iii. 14.* “Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever, nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.”

Should it be demanded, wherefore was Christ sent into the world, if the object of his mission was not to promulgate a *new law*, by which mankind were to regulate themselves? To other reasons that may be assigned, he may be said to have been sent into the world—TO GIVE mankind the most satisfactory evidence of a *resurrection*, and a *future life*, which he did by *his own proper resurrection*. Therefore, St. Paul says, *I. Cor. xvi. 14. 20.* “If Christ be not

"risen, then is our preaching vain; but
 "now is Christ risen from the dead, and is
 "become the first-fruits of them that slept."

—To GIVE us an *example* and *pattern* of
 the *most perfect resignation to the will of*
 God—AND BY HIS DEATH *abolishing*
 the CEREMONIAL LAW of the Jews,
 and introducing the Gentiles into the king-
 dom of God, as appears from the following
 passages. *Ephes. ii. 13.* "But now in
 "Christ Jesus, they, who were afar off
 "(the Gentiles) are made nigh by the blood
 "of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath
 "made both one. 16. That he might re-
 "concile both unto God, in one body, by
 "the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
Col. ii. 14. "Blotting out the hand-writing
 "of ordinances, that was against us, which
 "was contrary to us, and took it out of the
 "way, nailing it to his cross.

D I V O R C E.

By the *Mosaick law*, and consequently
 in the *sight of God*, there is but *one just*
cause for divorce, which would entirely *ab-*
solve a man from his engagements to his
wife; to wit, *fornication*, either before, or
 after marriage: in the former case, we
 call it *whoredom*, in the latter, *adultery*.
 The husband was not *necessarily* obliged to
 bring his wife to a *public trial*; but might,
 more decently, have a meeting of her

friends, before whom he might bring the proofs of the facts alledged against her; and if they were satisfied, the divorce took place, and was esteemed *legal*. Tender husbands were induced to this mode, as in case the woman was publicly convicted of adultery after marriage, she and her paramour would be *stoned to death*. Even after betrothing herself only, or *promising to marry a man*; if before her cohabitation with him, she was guilty of *whoredom*, she was deemed an *adulteress*, and as such was punished, and the man as an adulterer. *Deut. xxii. 23.* If the man was ignorant of her *betrothment* or *engagement*, the woman only was *punished* as an *adulteress*.—*Deut. xxii. 21.*—Though Moses, *Deut. xxiv. 1, 4.* permitted divorces for other causes, yet that he *still looked upon a woman as the wife of the first husband*, who put her away for *any other cause*, appears evident from his calling (ver. 4.) the second marriage a *defilement*; a word *synonymous*, or of the same force, as *adultery*; as will appear from Ezekiel, xvii. 6, 11. 15.

MARRIAGE.

It being a very general idea, that no marriage is *valid*, unless the marriage ceremony be read over by a priest; it will not be *foreign* to our subject to make a few observations upon the grounds of this preju-

dice, before we enter upon *that* which constitutes a marriage in the sight of God.

To suppose, that a *human ceremony* is essential to constitute a marriage, is to suppose, that God, in appointing the *only marriage ordinance*, which he did appoint, left out the *essential part* of it, without which it could not be. And if the presence of a priest be essential to read the marriage ceremony, we have no record of a *lawful marriage* (and many marriages are recorded) from the first chapter of Genesis, to the last of Revelations; and so far from a priest being necessary to read over the service, there is not a hint in Scripture of a *priest's* being present at a marriage. But, that the followers of Christ, should conceive such an *idea* is very singular: for in the Christian church there is not, nor can there be such a minister or officer, as a *priest*. "For every priest (whether high-priest or other, compare *Heb. v. 1.* with *Heb. x. 11.*) taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to GOD, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; and by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And EVERY PRIEST standeth daily ministering and offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this MAN (CHRIST JESUS) after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; for by ONE

"OFFERING, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Of course, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, (*Heb. x. 26.* latter part) no more order of *priesthood* among men. So that if *priests* be *essentially necessary* to read over the service, since the death of Christ, his followers, (at least those of them, who were *believed* to have been *married*) have been living in a state of fornication, according to those (and they are by far the greatest part of the Christian world) who think a *priest's presence essential* in the solemnization of marriage; for if we believe Scripture, there is no such *particular set of men* among *Christians* as *priests*; besides, as fornicators, they cannot enter the kingdom of God. *I. Cor. vi. 9, 10.* But, "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

Priests did not interfere in marriages till the 12th century;—in which PETER LOMBARD discovered the institution of the *seven sacraments*, in the mystical expression of the *seven spirits of God*, which he understood as an assurance of the *seven-fold* operation of the spirit, in *baptism*, the *supper of the LORD*, *confirmation*, *penance*, *orders*, *mattimony*, and *extreme unction*; and the church of Rome soon countenanced his doctrine. As *marriage* being *esteemed a sacrament*, the administration of it by the hands of a *priest* followed of course; the belief of its absolute *nullity*

without this, was gradually received by the people; grew into an article of faith, and superstition has continued it amongst us to to this present hour. The clergy, by this means, became possessed of a fresh source of wealth and power; for, what with the fees, or offerings, as they were more gently termed, for marriage itself, that is, for performing the ceremony, the publication of banns, dispensations, and licenses: it has proved to them a sort of philosopher's stone. The Albigenes and Lollards, the Protestants of these days, gave every opposition to the encroachments of the church of Rome, with regard to marriage; which drew down on them all manner of persecution and reproach:—at last the storm fell so heavily upon them, that it ended in their destruction. It is not improbable, that Protestants now a-days would act a similar part, if not restrained by government, towards polygamists; without reflecting, that before they condemn, they should bring it to the test of Scripture.—“To the law and to the testimony.” *Isaiah*, viii. 20.—“And that sin is not imputed, where there is no law.” *Rom.* v. 13.—“And where no law is, there is no transgression.” *Rom.* iv. 15.—“For sin is the transgression of the law.”—*I. John*, iii. 4.

Marriage, in the sight of God, consisted in the personal union of a man with a woman. Wherever this union should

come to pass, though *two* distinct and independent persons before, they now were to become as *one*. "They shall be one flesh, *Gen. ii. 24.* and so indissolubly *one*, as to be inseparable. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." *Mat. xix. 6.* This is the only *marriage ordinance*, which we find revealed in the sacred Scriptures. Conformably to this Moses ordains, *Exo. xxii. 16. 17.*—"If a man entice a maid, that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife: if her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins." Hence it appears, that if a man enticed a virgin, not *betrothed*, to marry him, and that he lay with her, she necessarily became his *wife*, because he *humbled her*; as will immediately appear, for a *personal union* of a man with a woman is the only *marriage ordinance*, which we find revealed in Scripture. So that in this case, a father *might be compelled* to deliver up his daughter, though in her nonage, and consequently in his power, to her husband upon his paying the dowry of virgins. For, whom God hath joined together, let not men put asunder. But, if her husband had *not* lain with her, but only enticed her to betroth* herself to him by

* Spoufals de futuro are a *mutual promise* or *covenant* of *marriage* to be had afterwards; as when the man saith to the woman,—“I will take thee to my wife:” and she

promising to marry him, and the father should utterly refuse to give her to him, (for from Numbers, xxx. 3, 4, 5, it appears, that fathers had a negative upon their daughter's engagements during youth or nonage) the man still paid the dowry, and consequently became the *husband*, in fact, when her youth or nonage *ceased*. A man was also obliged to marry the woman, which was not *betrothed*; whom he had laid hold on, and lay with. *Deut. xxii. 28, 29.* "If a man find a damsel, that is a virgin, that is not *betrothed*, and lay hold on her, and lie with her; and they be found: the man that lay with her shall give the damsel's father, fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, **BECAUSE HE HATH HUMBLLED HER**, he may not put her away all his days." The qualification, *betrothed*, annexed to virgin, or maid, and not to the man, shews that a man, in these passages, as in the 22d verse, means any man, whether married or unmarried. Moreover, a *betrothed virgin* in the law of God is looked upon as a *married woman*, and as *such* is called her *betrothed husband's wife*; and accordingly, if she suffered herself to be *defiled*, she and the man were to

then answered, I will take thee to my husband." Espousals de presenti are a mutual promise of present matrimony, as when the man doth say to the woman, "I do take thee to my wife;" and she then answereth, "I do take thee to my husband." ii. Burn, 16.

be stoned to death, as in the case of a woman who cohabited with her husband. *Deut. xxii. 24.* "If a damsel, that is a virgin, be bethrothed unto a husband, and a man shall find her in the city, and lie with her, then shall ye bring them both unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones, that they die: the damsel because she cried not, and the man because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife." Hence, it is evident, that a virgin, or maid, may be, in the sight of God, a wife, without the marriage or bethrothment being consummated; a simple engagement to marry a man being sufficient in the sight of God, to make a virgin a WIFE. When the bethrothment was kept a *secret*, and by that means the man was ignorant of it, the woman only in this case was punished. *Deut. xxii. 22.* "Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones, that she die, because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the fool in her father's house; so shalt thou put evil away from amongst ye." Hence, also appears the *sacredness* of these engagements in the sight of God, seeing that he has ordained *capital* punishment against the transgressors. If the woman brought the man before the judge, and proved the fact, he was obliged to marry her, or suffer *capitally*. *Deut. vii. 12.* "And the man

“ that will do presumptuously, and that
 “ will not hearken unto the priest (that
 “ standeth to administer there before the
 “ Lord thy God) or unto the judge, even
 “ that man shall die, and thou shalt put
 “ away the evil from Israel.” We may
 conclude without rashness that the virgin
 was equally compellable as the man to execute *her* engagement.

It is curious to compare how the *divine law* * and our *law* would *determine* in the case of a married man, who had debauched a *virgin*, and against whom she brought her action. The *law* of God would *compel* him to marry her under pain of death.

* Cardinal Bellarmine says, Christ gave Peter, (and of course the Pope) a power of making that NO SIN which is SIN, and to make that to be SIN which is NOT A SIN. Do not our acts of parliament assert the same power? Do not our acts of parliament (our marriage act) *dissolve* an union, which God, by Moses and Christ, has declared indissoluble? Is that a *justly* abhorred blasphemy from the pen of a Bellarmine? But, *enacted* and *brought into effect*, by a British or Irish act of parliament, does it *change its nature* and become LAWFUL? Is not this the *man of sin* described, 2 *Thess.* ii.—iii. 4. for it is “ *opposing and exalting himself above all that is called GOD, or that is worshipped; it is as GOD, sitting in the temple of GOD, swearing himself, that he is GOD.*” But, the Rev. Mr. Evanson has proved, in his incomparable Letter to the Bishop of Litchfield, that the *man of sin* is the *civil power*, or *government*, when it assumes the PREROGATIVE OF GOD, and DARES to lay down ARTICLES OF FAITH FOR MAN: and that HE is not a *local personage* confined to the *Pope of Rome*, but EXISTS in every CHRISTIAN COUNTRY, PROTESTANT as well as POPISH, in which the *government* has USURPED the PREROGATIVE of GOD, by *composing* articles of faith.

Our *law* would hang him (except for the benefit of the clergy) if he *married* her. But were she a *married* woman, the *divine law* would COMMAND him to be *stoned to death*; whereas our *law* would entirely acquit him. For though the injured husband might bring his *civil* action for private damages; yet neither the adulterer, nor adulteress, could be indicted, or punished as a *lawful offender*, by any one *statute* throughout our whole code of laws. This should appear the more extraordinary in a Christian country, in a country in which a faith of Scripture prevails, in that Scripture which assures us, that *whoredom* and *adultery*, as well as *murder*, if let go unpunished, defile the land, and bring down God's curses and severe visitations upon it. And surely in no country do whoredom, and adultery, and murder, (*honourable murder**) more prevail. These heinous sins are unnoticed by our laws; our manners even do not discountenance them. Persons guilty of the *three* are to be met with in most *genteel* societies; whereas the unfortunate *polygamist* is shun-

* I well know, that a man who kills another in a duel is by our law esteemed a murderer, as doing a mischief with malice *prepensé* or forethought, which the French word *prepensé* signifies. But the law in this respect has no effect: since juries bring in the prisoner guilty *only* of manslaughter in self-defence; unmindful of their oaths, possibly lest they should incur the imputation of cowardice. See the true distinction between manslaughter and murder, by Granville Sharp.

ned as a parricide, though clearly having
 the divine law to support him. May it
 not be said, " This people draw near me
 " with their mouth, and with their lips do
 " honour me, but have removed their
 " heart far from me, and their fear towards
 " me is taught by the precept of men."—
Isaiah xxix. 13. Well might our blessed
 Lord say, " that which is highly esteemed
 " among men is abomination in the sight
 " of God!" But we are taught in Scrip-
 ture to disregard the sentiments of men,
 when they come into competition with our
 duty to God. " And I say unto you, my
 " friends, be not afraid of them that kill
 " the body, and after that have no more
 " that they can do. But I will forewarn
 " you whom you shall fear: fear him,
 " which after he hath killed, hath power
 " to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you,
 " fear him."—*Luke xii. 45.* And " Bless-
 " ed are ye when men shall revile you, and
 " persecute you, and shall say all manner
 " of evil against you FALSELY for my
 " sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad,
 " for great is your reward in Heaven; for
 " to persecuted they the prophets that were
 " before you."—*Math. v. 11, 12.* But as
 " cursed is every one that continueth not
 " in ALL things which are WRITTEN
 " in the BOOK OF THE LAW, to DO
 " them."—*Deut. xxvii. 26.*—*Gal. iii. 10.*
 And as " Whosoever therefore shall break

“ ONE of these LEAST COMMAND-
 “ MENTS, and shall TEACH men so, he
 “ shall be called the LEAST in the king-
 “ dom of Heaven; but whosoever shall
 “ DO, and TEACH them, the same shall
 “ be called GREAT in the kingdom of Hea-
 “ ven.”—*Math. v. 19.* These two passa-
 ges, and many others in Holy Scripture,
 ought surely to alarm the oppugners, whe-
 ther in word or in deed, of God’s holy
 laws. But it is to be hoped, that their not
 knowing the Scriptures, will excuse them
 in the sight of an all-merciful God. *They*
have ERRED *because they* KNEW *not the*
 SCRIPTURE. But how far ignorance
 will be allowed a just plea, will appear from
 an extract, taken from Dr. Ward’s Disserta-
 tion, with which I shall conclude this
 pamphlet; first laying before the reader a
 Letter of the Rev. Mr. Madan’s to a Cor-
 respondent in the Gentleman’s Magazine,
 vol. 1. who, from *report only*, had adopted
 an ill opinion of his work entitled *The-*
lipthera, and had written against it without
 having read it.

‘ S I R,

‘ I am extremely concerned
 ‘ to find the report true which I have heard,
 ‘ that there are a set of *religious professors*
 ‘ who make it their business to speak all
 ‘ manner of evil against a man, who, I am
 ‘ sure, never offended them, and to vilify
 ‘ a publication which numbers of them

' have never read. Your letter bespeaks
 ' you one of these; and, by its contents,
 ' it should seem you must be one of the
 ' foremost. How you can reconcile such
 ' abuse and evil speaking to the religion
 ' you profess, I own I am at a loss to con-
 ' ceive. This teacheth you another les-
 ' son: beg of God that you may learn it,
 ' and in order to this, consider deeply what
 ' is written Math. vii. 1, 2.—1 Cor. xiii.
 ' and James iii. 5. &c. which last Scripture
 ' may be applied to the pen as well as to
 ' the tongue.

' The injury which you do either the
 ' author or the book is of very little con-
 ' sequence to either; but if you read and
 ' understand the work, you will find that
 ' all your hard speeches, and all the horrid
 ' consequences you draw, are levelled at Him
 ' before whom you must one day appear, to
 ' give an account of every *idle* word. The
 ' law which he delivered at *Mount Sinai* is
 ' the grand subject of the whole; to set
 ' forth its wisdom and glorious sufficiency
 ' for the protection of the female sex from
 ' adultery and whoredom, is the single end
 ' and aim of the author. God's jealousy
 ' over this law, its unchangeableness, con-
 ' sistency, and mercy, to the weaker sex,
 ' runs, like the warp through the woof,
 ' throughout the work. *Whom then hast*
 ' *thou reproached and blasphemed? and*
 ' *against whom hast thou exalted thy voice,*
 ' *and lifted up thy voice on high? even against*

' *the holy one of Israel.* These words said
 ' *Isaiah concerning Senecharib.* And I am
 ' sorry to think, how applicable they are
 ' to those who charge consequences of the
 ' most horrid and even unnatural kind on
 ' that law which *Moses* received from *Je-*
 ' *hovah*, and delivered by his command to
 ' the people, as the rule of their obedience
 ' to the mind and will of God therein re-
 ' vealed.

' Having said thus much, I recommend
 ' it to you as a matter of duty, to read di-
 ' ligently, and if you find a single doctrine
 ' advanced but on the authority of the *di-*
 ' *vine law*, you have my free leave to say
 ' what you please; but if you find this
 ' law, and nothing but this law the mea-
 ' sure and rule of all that is said, then take
 ' care what you say,—*lest haply you be found*
 ' *to fight against God.*

' Under God's law, *adultery* was a *cap-*
 ' *ital* offence, and punished with death.
 ' Our "excellent law," as you call it, has
 ' no punishment for it as a public offence;
 ' this country is over-run with it. But
 ' would not a restoration of God's law put
 ' a stop to it? Do you think a book likely
 ' to be favoured by the rich and opulent
 ' in the pleasurable world, which insists on
 ' God's law in this point?

' Again, God's law forbid any man to
 ' *put away the virgin he has seduced.* See
 ' *Ex. xxii. 16.*—*Deut. xxii. 28, 29.* The
 ' non-observance of this law is the evi-

' dent cause of *public prostitution*, and all
 ' its dreadful consequences;—nay, of child
 ' murder,—female destruction in every
 ' shape,—and of the ravages of that dis-
 ' ease which ruins and slays its tens of
 ' thousands of both sexes. How think
 ' you, that the men of gallantry will like
 ' to be told, that if they seduce a virgin,
 ' God's law forbids them ever to part with
 ' her? Or ought a man to be reviled and
 ' abused by the *religious*, as an apostate and
 ' miscreant, for holding up to view the law
 ' of Heaven, which was ordained for the
 ' protection of the weaker sex, from all
 ' such dreadful mischiefs? Or is the fe-
 ' male sex in general “bound to curse the
 ' existence (as you very shockingly express
 ' yourself) of the man” who brings forth
 ' the law of Jehovah in their defence?

' Here and there *polygamy* might happen,
 ' otherwise the Scriptures above-mentioned
 ' could not have their full force and effect
 ' for the prevention of prostitution. Still
 ' this is God's law;—*And who art thou, O*
 ' *man! that repliest against God?* Yet,
 ' even in a temporal view, let us ask which
 ' is the most mischievous, the seeing our
 ' streets full of prostituted girls,—our bro-
 ' thels crowded with harlots,—and thou-
 ' sands rotting alive,—or that here and
 ' there a man should be obliged to keep
 ' and maintain more women than one?
 ' Could any domestic evil or inconvenience
 ' which might happen in such a case, be

‘ put in competition with the other ? Certainly not. So God thought when he ordained his laws; and if we don’t think with Him, I am sure we don’t do right.

‘ To imagine that *Jesus Christ* came to *destroy the law*, is to give the lie to what he himself *declares*; or that he came to *mend* it, or improve it, is to suppose something just as bad; for it is supposing that the great Lawgiver at *Mount Sinai* grew wiser afterwards than he was before; or that the *Law-giver* of the *Jews* was not the law-giver to the Christians. Here we may talk of a journey to Turkey, for it was on a similar tenet on which Mahomet founded his Alcoran—Noah was to mend the law of Adam—Abraham that of Noah—Moses that of Abraham—and Christ’s that of Moses—and Mahomet’s Alcoran was to mend them all.

‘ I have written more than I intended, or than such a letter as I am now answering deserved; however, I feel my heart so wishing the good of all, that I would not suffer any to be in the wrong, if aught I could say or do might set them right.

‘ In whatever else you are wrong, I am sure you are wrong in the spirit and temper with which you write. Zeal is good—but there is a zeal without knowledge—a bitter zeal—which hurries people into indecent language and ill manners;—makes them forget that great commandment of the law,—*thou shalt love thy neigh-*

' *bour as thyself.* Such a zeal as this the
 ' Jews exercised against *Christ* and his apo-
 ' stles; the *papists* against the *reformers*; and
 ' such, alas! has been exercised against me.
 ' I wish to forgive all; and wish that God
 ' may forgive them, and give them repen-
 ' tance to the acknowledgment of the truth.

' I am, Sir,

' your humble servant, &c."

The Gentleman to whom the above let-
 ter was addressed, followed the author's ad-
 vice; read the work with care and atten-
 tion, and was fully convinced that it had
 no such evil tendency as he had been made
 to believe; he therefore, like a *true Chri-*
stian, humbly acknowledged his error, and
 begged pardon of God and the author, for
 his unwarrantable zeal; for, (said he) it is
 written "REBUKE not an ELDER, but
 intreat him as a FATHER."

*How far might Ignorance excuse St. Paul's
persecuting Christians?*

' St. PAUL was bred a Pharisee, which
 ' was the strictest and most zealous sect of
 ' the Jews. Here he imbibed these early
 ' and strong prejudices against Christianity,
 ' which seem to have been heightened by
 ' his own natural temper: so that he not
 ' only persecuted them out of Judea, be-
 ' ing, as he says, exceedingly mad a-

' gainst them, *κατακριντες* *κατακρινουσιν* *αυτους*, outra-
 ' geous and furious. Acts xvi. 11. But,
 ' 1 Tim. i. 13. he says, *I obtained mercy,*
 ' *because I did it ignorantly*, in unbelief,
 ' *αγνοων οτι εστιν.* So St. Peter ascribes the
 ' Jews crucifixion of Christ to their igno-
 ' rance, *αδια νου*, and therefore encour-
 ' ages them to repent. Acts iii. 17, 19.
 ' And our Saviour himself prays his Fa-
 ' ther to forgive them for the same reason,
 ' by saying, *they know not what they do.*—
 ' Luke xxiii. 34. And elsewhere, speaking
 ' of the Jews, he tells his disciples, they
 ' would not only put them out of the sy-
 ' nagogues, but likewise whoever killed
 ' them would think he did God service.—
 ' John xvi. 2. But, however, all these
 ' things are represented as criminal. St.
 ' Paul says, he *obtained mercy*, which is an
 ' acknowledgment of guilt; for guilty
 ' persons only are objects of mercy. And
 ' though, during this treatment of the Chri-
 ' stians, he says, he had *lived in all good*
 ' *conscience before God*, Acts xxiii. 1. yet
 ' elsewhere he calls himself *the chief of sin-*
 ' *ners* on that account. 1 Tim. iv. 14.
 ' A person, therefore, may, at the same
 ' time, act conscientiously, and yet crimi-
 ' nally: an erroneous conscience does not
 ' excuse him, unless he has used all the
 ' means in his power to be rightly inform-
 ' ed. St. Paul had been trained up under
 ' very strong prejudices against Christiani-
 ' ty, without ever attending to its evi-

dence; which was in itself criminal, and became much more so by his conduct. And though it be said, that an erroneous conscience is binding, yet it is not to be supposed, that the goodness of God will ever permit an honest mind, desirous to know the truth, and using all proper methods for the attainment, to remain to the last in any fatal mistakes: which makes it difficult to apprehend how deism can be consistent with integrity, where persons have an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the excellence of the Christian religion. It seems not to agree with those plain and express denunciations of the damnable state of infidels, declared both by Christ himself and his apostles. If the evidence of Christianity was not sufficient to convince every honest and impartial enquirer after its truth, and the necessity of its belief, how comes it to pass, that damnation is denounced against unbelievers in as strong and express terms, as salvation is promised to those who do sincerely believe? *He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. John iii. 36. He that believeth not shall be damned. Mark xvi. 16. If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost. 2 Cor. iv. iii.*

P. S.

AS there are many who may not perceive, from ignorance in grammatical construction, the conclusiveness of the argument in note page 6, from *relative to antecedent*, I shall further observe upon this, and the parallel passages in Mark and Luke, that if Christ intended to introduce in them a NEW LAW to condemn polygamy as adultery, he, who spoke as no man ever spoke, must have expressed himself very inaccurately, when conscientious men, and of the soundest understanding, as Grotius, Barbeyrac, and Wetstein, must be allowed to be, could not find that in those passages polygamy was forbidden, and who, as *anti-polygamists*, must have been biaised to such an interpretation. Would Bellarmine and Cajetan have declared, that marrying more than one woman at the same time was not contrary to the divine law, if they understood, that a law forbidding polygamy, was contained in these passages? Would the apostles have said, that it would be better not to marry at all, if men might not put away their wives for every cause, if they understood that Christ condemned polygamy in those passages? For that would be to say, that it was better to have no wife at all than not to have more than one; or that but one was worse than none. Would not Christ have observed, (to prevent all misapprehension, as in the case of divorce,

—It is true that Moses, for the hardness of your hearts, allowed polygamy, but I, who am come to give you a purer doctrine, tell you that in future it is forbidden you.

1 Cor. 7th chap.

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

This passage is supposed to discountenance a plurality of wives. I will observe, that *to avoid* is not in the original—that *fornication* is plural in the Greek.—It should be thus translated: “Nevertheless, in respect of fornications, let every man have his wife, and let every woman have her own husband;” that is, let every man keep his wife to himself and not change her for a time for another man’s wife, as was the practice among the Corinthians, encouraged thereto by the followers of Plato, by whom such a practice was esteemed *innocent*; and about which they were probably consulting him. It is also to be observed, that the two words in Greek, which we translate *his own* and *her own*, are *autos* and *hutes*, the former signifies *his*, but not in so peculiar a manner, but that a person may have many of the sort; as *his* (stable) horse does not prevent a man’s having more than one horse. The word *hutes*, which we translate *his own*, is appropriated throughout Scripture to express those relations, which preclude all similar ones: as *his* God—*his*

master. Now the first (*uxoris*) is uniformly applied in Scripture to express the relation of a man to his wife; which shews, that a woman could not be his (*uxoris*) wife in such a manner, but that he might have another. But the word *idior* is always made use of to express the relation of the woman to the man; which being always used to express our relation to the Deity—of a servant to his master—as his God—his master, and such other relations as exclude all similar ones, shews, that a woman, being a man's wife, necessarily precluded her from having any other husband. It is also to be observed, that the Greek language has no peculiar term to express the relation of a woman to her husband; but, as in French, a man's wife is called *sa femme*, or his woman, so in Greek she is called *uxoris suam*, or the wife of himself. The husband is stiled *idior ardyas*, or her own man, as excluding every other relation of the same kind. Was the word *wife* left out of our translation, and *his woman* substituted in its stead, it would be a means of removing prejudices. That St. Paul allowed polygamy, appears evident from comparing the 11th verse of the 7th chap. of the 1st of Cor. with the 27th and 28th. In the 11th he says, "*But if and she (the wife) depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.*" But in the 27th and 28th verses he says, "*Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if*

thou marry thou hast not sinned. A comment upon this is unnecessary.

If from *husband* and *wife* being in the singular number in the 2d verse, chap. 7th, 1 Cor. we are to infer the condemnation of polygamy, thus explaining Scripture by sound and not by the context, we should uniformly explain it so. By this mode there would be but *one* ox, *one* ass, &c. forbidden to be coveted in the 10th commandment. Thus *seek not a wife*, forbids marriage; and 1 Tim. iii. 12. ordering *deacons* to have only *one* wife among them, establishes polyandry, or a plurality of husbands. But such mode of interpreting is absurd.

To prevent any person from inferring from what is said upon marriage, that the Author is an enemy to any human ceremony being super-added to that which constitutes a *lawful* marriage in the sight of God, he here declares, that he esteems it the *duty* of every society to require a *public* recognition of the contract from the parties under severe penalties: but the *mode* is a matter of indifference, so that it be effectual for the notoriety of the contract, and the prevention of causeless divorce.

F I N I S.

[illegible]

21417